

BY JOHN WALSH

With them in mind

A superintendent lets distributors know about his pesticide program ahead of time to ensure timely delivery and savings

Presently, Troy Golden might be a golf course superintendent, but he once was a sales representative distributing turf products to golf courses. That experience influences the way Golden purchases pesticides for the course he maintains, the public 18-hole Wilcox Springs Golf Course in Haslet, Texas.

The family-owned public course, which features common Bermudagrass on the fairways and Tifgreen (328) on the greens, has been open since 1968. Golden, who has been there for five years, has a staff of four during the winter and six during the summer. His maintenance budget, including labor, is \$450,000. Sans labor, it's \$313,000. Last year, Golden spent \$67,000 on pesticides and fertilizer (\$35,000 on pesticides alone). Generally, he says he has increased the pesticide budget about 3 percent every year for the past five years.

"More and more, I'm buying generic pesticides," he says. "Mainly thiophanate-methyl and chlorothalonil products."

Golden also buys and uses name brand products such as Barricade, Scimitar, Talstar, Daconil, TopChoice, Ceasefire, Merit, Mach 2, Eagle, Cleary's 3336 and Revolver.

APPLICATIONS

As part of Golden's overall pesticide program, he uses Mach 2 (halofenozide) for grub control and Scimitar (lambda-cyhalothrin) for

cut worms and other common insects. He also uses Ceasefire (fipronil) for fire ant control.

"It's a must down here," he says about the fire-ant-control product. "It's about one-third of my pesticide budget. It's our biggest pest to battle, but we have good success with the products we use."

Golden applies Ceasefire wall-to-wall twice a year – once in the spring and once in the fall. He follows those applications with TopChoice (fipronil) as needed around tees and greens.

Golden applies Mach 2 in spring at the end of April or first of May. He says Mach 2 has good residual and one has several months to reap the benefit, but with Merit, one has to hit a shorter window. Then he sprays three products in rotation during the summer: Scimitar, Talstar (bifenthrin) and Insecticide III (chlorpyrifos).

"I try to rotate the different chemistries," he says.

Golden doesn't use a lot of insecticides

during the fall, but uses Talstar during that time for cutworms and chinch bugs.

Because Golden has a limited budget, he says he combines a preemergent herbicide with a granular quick-release fertilizer during the last week of February or the first week in March. He uses Team Pro (benefin and trifluralin) because it's cost effective – even though he doesn't get as long a residual that he would with Barricade or Ronstar – as a granular for weed control in the early spring to give him 60 days control. Then he applies Team Pro again, a split rate with fertilizer to give him residual control heading into the summer.

About that time, Golden also applies a 2,4-D and MSMA tank mix to control broadleaf weeds and dallisgrass through the summer. During the last week of August, he applies more fertilizer with pendimethalin, and that starts his fall preemergent program. About the first of November, he sprays Scimitar and Revolver (foramsulfuron). In the dead of winter, he applies Roundup (glyphosate) wall to wall sometimes.

In the fungicide realm, Golden uses Cleary's 3336 (thiophanate-methyl) and Daconil (chlorothalonil) for turf diseases, and Eagle (myclobutanil) for, more specifically, spring dead spot. In the spring, he uses Cleary's 3336 and rotates that every 30 days with Daconil through early summer. Then

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PESTICIDES

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Superintendent Troy Golden gives the two or three distributors he works with a copy of his pesticide program so they know what he needs and when he needs it.

he sprays Rubigan (fenarimol), once in August and once in September, for *Poa annua* control and Eagle for spring dead spot. During the winter, Golden applies Daconil or Cleary's 3336 on an as needed curative basis.

PURCHASING

Before Golden purchases anything, he sets his agronomic program by the first of the year. Then he lets the two or three distribu-

tors he uses know what he'll need when throughout the year. He pays as he goes.

"I've been doing this same process for a while," he says. "You can lock in pricing. It's good because it's done and out of the way. It solves delivery problems and lets the distributors know where they stand. It helps build better relationships. I get better service because the distributors know what to give me ahead of time.

"When I talk to distributors in January

about the year, I'll give them a copy of what I'm doing so they know when to deliver the products," he adds. "I know a lot of guys don't do that because they don't like showing people their plan. A lot of guys will call and say, 'I need a preemergent herbicide in two weeks,' but they don't know what it takes to get the product there. You can save money by not putting the distributor in a bind in which he has to jump through hoops." **GCI**